

St Cuthbert's RC Junior and Infant (NC) School

Gumbleberrys Close, Off Cotterills Lane, Birmingham, B8 2PS

Inspection dates 8–9 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The new headteacher, supported well by the senior leaders, has successfully encouraged greater ambition across the whole school.
- With the full support of parents and carers, pupils have increased their efforts. They achieve above-average standards and are keen to do even better.
- Good and increasingly outstanding teaching makes sure that pupils' progress is good throughout the school. Lessons are demanding, while encouraging pupils to have fun in learning. The teaching of reading is particularly good.
- The school develops pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills outstandingly well.
- Teachers and their capable assistants provide high-quality care. As a result, pupils feel safe, behave well, understand how to stay safe and healthy, and work extremely well together.
- In a stimulating environment, pupils are interested and involved in their learning. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and reinforced in different subjects.
- The headteacher, supported by senior colleagues and the governing body, checks the quality of teaching and learning carefully and makes sure that necessary improvements are made.
- Achievement continues to improve, most recently in pupils' mathematical skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils in Key Stage 1 do well, their progress is not as rapid as in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers do not always make full use of the information they gain from lessons about how well pupils are doing to plan future learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons taught by eight teachers. Five of these lessons were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also made several shorter visits to classrooms to observe the teaching of reading and small group sessions.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at lunchtime. They met formally with a group of pupils.
- Meetings were held with staff, senior leaders and managers, and governors. A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress, and pupils' books.
- They took into account the 20 responses from parents and carers shown on Parent View (the online questionnaire) and responses from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ron Hall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kerin Jones	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, but the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides extra funding for looked-after children, those from forces families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2012, following a period as the deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
 - teachers use day-to-day information on pupils' attainment and progress consistently well in their planning, so that they always set work at exactly the right level
 - this information is fully accurate as pupils move between Reception and Year 1.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children typically start school with skills and understanding that are well below the levels expected nationally for their age. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception, although attainment at the start of Year 1 is still generally below average.
- Pupils make good overall progress in Years 1 and 2, although it is not consistently good. Historic inaccuracies in the information passed between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 mean that progress starts slowly as teachers take time to compensate and make sure work is at the right level for the pupils. The headteacher has recognised this problem and is in the process of developing more accurate systems.
- Progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been above the national average for several years, especially in English.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is good, and as a result pupils' reading skills at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above average.
- Progress in mathematics has improved since the last inspection and is now reaching the same levels as in English. Progress in other subjects is also accelerating. In a design and technology lesson, for example, outstanding teaching resulted in pupils being able to cut, shape, measure and fit together a variety of materials with accuracy and skill.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs exceeds nationally expected rates. This is because their progress is checked carefully and extra adults support their work and adapt it to suit their needs. This approach also makes sure that those who are new to speaking English make good progress and do better than their peers nationally.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide extra adult support for the pupils concerned, individually or in small groups as necessary, and a specialist teacher who works with both the pupils and their families. As a result, these pupils make good progress and do better than their peers nationally.
- All of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers usually plan lessons that are stimulating and motivating. Many make good use of information and communication technology to engage and interest pupils. However, teachers do not always use the information they gain on pupils' progress in one lesson when planning the next, and so do not always make sure they match the work precisely to the pupils' abilities.
- Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception provides children with a wide variety of activities that promote good learning. Both the indoor and outdoor areas are used well to provide good opportunities for learning, especially aspects of physical development, and children are encouraged to make independent choices.
- Teachers support pupils who have additional needs and those who join the school partway

through the year particularly well. They assess these pupils' needs thoroughly when they first arrive, and quickly give good-quality support and guidance for those who need it. This is provided by a specialist teacher and other well-trained adults.

- Teachers usually find ways to make learning fun and engaging, and sometimes the results are highly impressive. In an English lesson on understanding the feelings of others and how to write about past events, the teacher and a young pupil enacted the roles of an evacuee and mother during the Second World War so well that all the pupils in the class were close to tears with sympathy for them both. A video clip of a bombing raid and some excellent probing questions from the teacher helped pupils to imagine and describe their own evacuation, know how others felt, and use superb descriptive language in their written work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very positive about the way the school looks after them and helps them feel and stay safe. They say that behaviour is good and there is no bullying or disruption to lessons. All the parents and carers who responded to Parent View feel that their children are safe and behaviour is good.
- The school has a calm, friendly, caring and orderly atmosphere. This is seen especially during lunchtime, where pupils sit talking sensibly with their friends. One pupil said, 'When you join this school it feels just like home when you welcome a guest.'
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave, and use consistent strategies for encouraging good behaviour that are based upon praise. This makes sure good behaviour is a key feature in all lessons.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning help them to make good progress. Their ability to work together well in pairs or small groups contributes to their learning in all subjects. Where teaching is not as strong pupils are sometimes easily distracted, but even in these cases they behave well.
- Attendance is above the national average. It has improved year on year due to the effective strategies to encourage parents and carers to make sure that pupils come to school regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have a very clear and ambitious vision of how the school can improve further and share this very effectively with all staff and governors. They know exactly how well the school is doing. The areas for development identified by the last inspection have been fully addressed, and the quality of teaching and learning improved. The school has a good capacity to improve further.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders check regularly on how good teaching is and provide high-quality training and support to improve it where necessary, for example by working alongside teachers and demonstrating good practice. The headteacher makes well-informed decisions about teachers moving up the salary scale on the basis of these checks.
- The way subjects are taught encourages pupils to be creative and imaginative, but also systematically builds up their reading and mathematical skills. It makes a strong contribution to the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, take great pride in caring for others and know all about

different religions and cultures.

- The school celebrates the differences between pupils from all backgrounds and abilities, and meets national requirements for safeguarding children. This helps to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed without discrimination.
- The systems for recording and analysing information about pupils' progress are mostly thorough. Senior staff and subject leaders use this information well to make sure that targets set for the school and the pupils are demanding. A new system is being developed to make sure that the transfer of data from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 is more accurate.
- The local authority has a good relationship with the school. As it considers the school to be good, it appropriately provides only 'light touch' support. It has helped the school to improve teaching, and assisted the headteacher in her role. Good links with other local schools help to widen pupils' sporting and other learning opportunities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the school well, but also asks searching questions of the headteacher and senior leadership team to make sure it is providing a good education. Governors maintain a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses through meetings with the staff and leaders, thorough analysis of data and direct observations in school. They keep a close check on the school budget and make sure, for example, that pupil premium money is used well to improve achievement. They are fully aware of pupils' attainment and progress, and how they compare to those achieved by pupils in similar schools nationally. Governors oversee the quality of teaching by ensuring that the leadership team monitor this effectively, and that teachers' pay is clearly linked to improvements in pupils' progress. Continual training for all governors makes sure that they are able to monitor the work of the school effectively, and that safeguarding policies and practices meet national requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103470
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	395687

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Paul Devaney
Headteacher	Sarah Hobbs
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2009
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